

look at Venezuela, which has more oil than Saudi Arabia has. Their economy is in shambles, and children are dying because they can't get food and medical treatment.

That is what socialism gives the people, Mr. Speaker.

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I am deeply concerned about the homelessness crisis that is plaguing our country.

Homelessness affects the very fabric of our communities, and it degrades the values upon which our country was built. Every American has the right to safe, decent, and affordable housing; but according to the latest estimates, nearly 600,000 Americans are currently homeless, over 83,000 of whom are chronically homeless and nearly 130,000 of whom are children who are under the age of 18, and these numbers are increasing in some of our major cities. Sadly, in my own hometown, in Los Angeles, homelessness increased by a staggering 20 percent between 2014 and 2015, and it continues to rise.

But this is not just about the numbers. When I visit our homeless neighbors on Skid Row in Los Angeles, I see how these Americans are facing chronic mental and physical problems that make it even harder to rehabilitate their lives. When I speak to families that are dealing with homelessness, I see the toll this housing insecurity is taking on their children, who can't concentrate in school because they are sleeping in cars at night.

There is a solution to this problem, Mr. Speaker. We just need the political will and resources. That is why earlier this year I introduced comprehensive legislation to provide the resources we need to truly end homelessness in America.

My bill, H.R. 4888, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2016, would provide over \$13 billion over 5 years to strengthen programs and initiatives that will help us end homelessness in this country. The money will help to create approximately 410,000 units of housing to end homelessness for the estimated 407,000 homeless households in the country. This includes permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher units, and deeply affordable units through the National Housing Trust Fund.

My bill would also provide the resources to increase the number of outreach workers on the streets, working with homeless populations. Furthermore, my bill would provide technical assistance to help States and localities align their health and housing systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has

reported that major progress toward ending homelessness in this country has virtually stalled without new funding. So there is a real need to invest in our Federal housing programs and to support our local service providers who are on the streets helping the homeless every day.

Passing H.R. 4888 would be an investment that would pay dividends in the long run. Research has shown that when we provide housing to chronically homeless individuals, the cost to the taxpayer is significantly less than if we allowed them to remain homeless. For example, Los Angeles County's Project 50 found that providing permanent supportive housing to 50 chronically homeless individuals saved the county close to \$250,000 over 2 years. Similar results have been found in other major cities as well as in small cities and in rural areas alike.

But this isn't just about the cost or the savings, Mr. Speaker. It is about recognizing the crisis that we face as a Nation and having an honest conversation about what we really need to do to put an end to homelessness.

We are the richest country in the world, and every person should have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. This should be a bipartisan issue. We must, all of us, Democrats and Republicans, work together to finally end homelessness in this country once and for all.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I will be on this floor every chance I get to force the real debate and the real conversation about this crisis that we are confronted with in America. We cannot continue to walk past homeless, helpless, mentally ill, physically ill homeless people on the streets and pretend we don't see them. They are there. It is unconscionable that we allow this homelessness to continue to grow and to be on our streets.

In Los Angeles, when you go to so-called Skid Row, we have people on the streets who are lined all the way up to the steps of City Hall.

Elected officials, ministers, community organizations, let's get together with our legislators, let's pass H.R. 4888, and stop the homelessness in America.

ECONOMIC, RETIREMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I want to discuss the issue of security with my colleagues—economic security, retirement security, and national security—three issues that probably right now in my conversations with constituents is what we hear the most about.

Let's look at the picture of economic security, or the lack thereof, that exists in our country and in our communities.

What I hear from my constituents is that the 5 percent unemployment rate is indeed misleading because over 90 million Americans have dropped out of the workforce. They are losing hope and are unemployed. The Obama malaise, as I have constituents who like to term it, has created a workforce participation rate of 62.8 percent. Now, I want you to think about that. Of the eligible adults who are ready for the workforce, 62.8 percent have a job and are able to work. That is the worst level since the Carter administration.

Our GDP is declining. Our economy grew at only half of a percent—half of a percent in the first quarter of 2016. That is lower than a 1.4 percent expansion in the previous period, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. President Obama had a chance to create 40,000 jobs, and he took a pass on it. He vetoed the Keystone pipeline so that he could cement his legacy and stature as a liberal icon.

The American people are tired of being broke; they are tired of work permits that go to illegal aliens; and they are tired of \$19.2 trillion in Federal debt. We need to get the government off the backs and out of the pocketbooks of the American people. It is time to loosen regulations and lower taxes.

The issue of retirement security comes up so often in the conversations I have, especially with women, and it is important to note what is happening with Social Security and Medicare. The Social Security retirement trust fund is set to run out of money by the year 2034. That is not that far away. According to the Tax Foundation, under the current wage indexing formula, benefits are projected to climb by more than 150 percent, in real terms, over the next 75 years.

I have introduced H.R. 603, the Savings for Seniors Act, which establishes within the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund a Social Security Surplus Protection Account to hold the Social Security surplus and prohibit it from being spent. Medicare has to be addressed as well. It is supposed to run out of money and be insolvent by 2030. We must make sure that seniors are secure, and we have to make certain that the money they have already paid into the system, they are able to receive.

On the national security front, President Obama's very, very timid foreign policy has emboldened our enemies from the rise of ISIS, to Russian aggression in Ukraine and in the Middle East, to the Chinese military expansion in the South China Sea. It has also left our allies asking: Where are you? You are not present as we try to address these issues.

What we have seen with President Obama, I think, is inexcusable. For example, when the evil blade of ISIS decapitated Steven Sotloff in 2014, President Obama was on the golf course minutes after telling the American people: We will be relentless, and we